Krsna Saves the Pandavas
by Amala Bhakta dasa

Scene One

Narrator: After the evil Duryodhana cheated the five Pandavas out of their kingdom and exiled them to the forest, he learned that the Pandavas and their wife, Draupadi, were dwelling as happily in the forest as they previously had in the city. But he, along with his sly friend Karna and his brother Dushashana yearned to make them unhappy by causing them harm. As they were concocting various evil schemes, the righteous and famous yogi Durvasa Muni arrived at Kuruksetra with his ten thousand disciples.

When the quick-tempered ascetic arrived, Duryodhana and his brothers welcome him with exceeding humility, submissiveness and kindness. Duryodhana personally waited on the sage as a servant and provided him with a very respectful reception. He knew that the famous ascetic hurled curses at the slightest provocation.

Sometimes the sage would exclaim, "I'm hungry! Bring me some food quickly!" At other times, he would say, "I have no appetite, so I won't eat anything today!" Then, he would vanish from sight. Later, he would suddenly appear and demand, "Feed us fast!" At other times, he would wake up at midnight and order Duryodhana to give him food. But, upon receiving it, he would criticize the food and refuse to eat it.

After testing Duryodhana in this way for a while and seeing that he was neither incensed nor irritated, the peppery sage became amiably disposed towards Duryodhana and said:

Durvasa: May you have good fortune! As I am pleased with you, you may obtain from me anything that is not antagonistic to religion or moral principles.

Duryodhana: King Yudhisthira is the oldest and best of our generation. That religious man is presently dwelling in the forest with his brothers. I'd like you to be his guest, just as you and your disciples have been mine for awhile. If you wish to do me a favor, then I'd like you to visit him right after his fine, lovely wife, Draupadi, has served food to the Brahmanas, her husbands and

herself and has laid down to rest.

Durvasa: Is that all?

Duryodhana: Yes, that's all.
(Durvasa and disciples leave.)

Narrator: Duryodhana felt that he had accomplished all his purposes, for he knew that Draupadi could not provide food for Durvasa's ten thousand disciples. Draupadi had a mystical pot, given to her by the Sun god, which could produce unlimited quantities of food; but once she had taken her meals, the pot would become empty. Duryodhana felt certain that if Durvasa and his disciples came to the hermitage of the Pandavas and became displeased with them, then Durvasa would curse the Pandavas.

Holding Karna's hand, Duryodhana displayed intense pleasure. Karna also became joyful.

Karna: By a bit of unusual good luck, you've done well and shall fulfill your desire to thwart the Pandavas. Pandu's sons will now be exposed to Durvasa's anger. Due to their own shortcomings, they have fallen into a chasm of darkness!

Scene Two - The Forest

(The Pandavas lie about after eating when Durvasa and his disciples [represented by 4 to 6 actors] arrive. The Pandavas happily greet them.)

Yudhisthira: We are honored to receive Your Honor and your disciples at our humble home. Please go to the river, take your bath and say your prayers. When you return, we will provide your party with some nice cooked rice and vegetables and then listen attentively to your discourse upon the Vedic Conclusions.
(Durvasa and disciples leave. The Pandavas tidy up but Draupadi exhibits great anxiety. She goes before the Deity and prays very fervently:)

Draupadi: O Krsna, son of Devaki; O Vasudeva, Lord of the universe; Your power is indefatigable and You dissipate the obstacles of people who bow down to You. You are the Supersoul, athe creator and destroyer of the cosmic manifestation. O Lord,

You are inexhaustible and you are the Deliverer of the distressed. You are the Preserver of all conditioned souls. You are the Highest of the high, the Source of all mental perceptions, knowledge and morality. O Highest and Unlimited Being, O Provider of all blessings, please be the shelter of the helpless.

O First Person, You are incapable of being imagined by the soul or the mental facilities. You are the Sovereign of all and the Ruler of Brahma. I seek Your protection, O Lord, You are always kind toward those who take shelter of You. Hold me with Your kindness! Your dark complexion resembles the blue lotus, Your reddish eyes resemble the petals of the lily, You wear yellow garments and a shiny Kaustubha jewel on Your chest. You are the beginning and the end of creation and the mighty shelter of all. You are the greatest light and the essence of the cosmos. Your face is pointed in every direction. They call You the highest source and the resting place of all opulences. O lord of the gods, when You protect someone, he is not afraid of evil. As You once protected me from Dushashana, who tried to strip off my garments before an assembly of men, please free me now from this plight!
(Krsna enters)

Krsna: Draupadi, I am very hungry! Please give Me some food immediately; then you may attend to your work.

Draupadi: (bewildered) But, Krsna,that is my whole problem! The pot that the sun god gave me stays full only until I finish my meal; and since I have taken it, there is nothing left. Now, how will I supply food to the great sage Durvasa Muni and his ten-thousand disciples?

Krsna: Draupadi, this is not the time for joking, I'm suffering from hunger. Go and get the pot quickly and show it to me.

Draupadi: Well, all right?
(Draupadi runs and fetches the pot. Krsna examines it intently and finds a tiny particle of rice and vegetable stuck to the rim. He takes this between His fingers and eats it with great relish.)

Krsna: May Lord Hari, the Supersoul of the universe, who receives all sacrifices, be pleased and fully satisfied with this. **(calls)** Bhima, go quickly and invite the holy men for dinner!
(Bhima leaves immediately.)

Scene Three - At the River

(Durvasa's diciples rub their stomachs with awe. They converse among themselves.)

Disciple: (to Durvasa) Master, our stomachs feel full, right up to the throat. King Yudhisthira has uselessly prepared a meal for us. What is the best course of action for us to take now?

Durvasa: If we refuse to accept the meal, we will commit a terrible offense against the royal saint. The Pandavas might glare at us angrily and kill us. I know that Yudhisthira has tremendous ascetic power. The Pandavas are highly elevated, pious, knowledgeable, protective, steadfast in ascetic disciplines and devoted to religious practices. They are also devoted to Lord Krsna and ever mindful of the principles of good behavior. If inflamed, they can destroy us with their anger as fire consumes a bale of cotton! Therefore, my disciples, I advise you not to return to them but to run away quickly!
(They exit)

Bhima: Maharaja? O Brahmanas? Where are you?
(He returns to the hermitage)

My brothers, a calamity has befallen us! Maharaj Durvasa and his glorious disciples have all fled this place! Now, we are forever without their association!

Krsna: While you were unaware of the danger from that hot-tempered sage, Draupadi prayed to Me to come here, so I came quickly. But now, you have no reason to fear Durvasa. He became fearful of your ascetic powers; thus, he and his disciples have gone away. Righteous men like you never have to worry. Allow Me to return home now. May you always have good fortune.

Yudhisthira: Krsna, by Your help, we've become freed from this unsolvable difficulty, just as persons drowning in the vast ocean reach the shore safely by means of a boat. You may now leave in peace, and may You always have good fortune.

Narrator: Lord Krsna returned to His capital. The Pandavas, roving from forest to forest, spent their days joyfully with Draupadi.

Thus, the scheme of the evil Duryodhana and his brothers was baffled. It was Queen Draupadi's great faith in Lord Krsna that caused Him to miraculously appear before her and save her and the Pandavas from being cursed by Yogi Durvasa. By developing such faith in the Supreme Lord, we can easily obtain His valuable grace and thereby increase our wisdom and virtue manyfold.